CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1 - 20. (canceled)

21. (new) A method of operating a spinneret having a multiplicity of spinning apertures through which a molten plastic is forced to form filaments, the method comprising the steps of:

a) closing dirt-contaminated or clogged spinning apertures of the spinneret with plugs consisting at least in part of at least one oxidizable binder substance consisting at least partially of amorphous carbon which, upon oxidative decomposition is destroyed;

b) subjecting at least a portion of the device containing the apertures and the plugs to a pyrolysis treatment for breakdown of residual plastic on the portion of the device; and

c) subjecting the portion of the device to an oxidative treatment to oxidize the substance and destroy the binder substance of the plugs.

22. (new) The method defined in claim 21 wherein the plugs consist of graphite and the oxidizable substance.

23. (new) The method defined in claim 21 wherein the pyrolysis treatment of step b) is carried out at a subatmospheric pressure.

24. (new) The method defined in claim 23 wherein the pyrolysis treatment of step b) is carried out under inert conditions.

25. (new) The method defined in claim 24 wherein the oxidative treatment of step c) is carried out at a temperature above 100°C in the presence of at least one oxidizing medium.

26. (new) The method defined in claim 25 wherein the oxidative treatment is carried out at a temperature above 150°C.

27. (new) The method defined in claim 26 wherein the oxidative treatment is carried out at a temperature between 210°C and 600°C.

28. (new) The method defined in claim 27 wherein the oxidative treatment is carried out at a temperature of 250°C to 550°C.

29. (new) The method defined in claim 28 wherein the oxidative treatment is carried out at a temperature of 350°C to 500°C.

30. (new) The method defined in claim 29 wherein the oxidizing medium is air or pure oxygen.

31. (new) The method defined in claim 30 wherein the oxidative treatment is carried out at a reduced pressure.

32. (new) The method defined in claim 31 wherein the portion is cleaned following at least one of the treatments in an ultrasound bath.

33. (new) The method defined in claim 32 wherein the portion is cleaned following at least one of the treatments with a high-pressure cleaner.

34. (new) The method defined in claim 21 wherein the pyrolysis treatment of step b) is carried out at a subatmospheric pressure.

35. (new) The method defined in claim 21 wherein the pyrolysis treatment of step b) is carried out under inert conditions.

36. (new) The method defined in claim 21 wherein the oxidative treatment of step c) is carried out at a temperature between 350°C to 500°C in the presence of at least one oxidizing

medium selected from the group consisting of air, oxygen-enriched air and pure oxygen.

37. (new) The method defined in claim 21, further comprising the step of

cleaning the portion following at least one of the treatments in an ultrasound bath.

38. (new) The method defined in claim 21, further comprising the step of

cleaning the portion following at least one of the treatments with a high-pressure cleaner.